



# Creating Gold

with David Mutch

This tutorial was originally written for Photo-Paint versions 8 and 9 in 2001, and due to some changes in PP's interface I've now re-written it here for use with the latest versions of PP, versions 2018 (20) and 2019 (21), 18 years and 12 versions later. Surprisingly, most of the major steps only need a little revision and even following the original tutorial, one can easily create a good result and a very nice gold text effect. The effect can be applied to other objects, not just text, but keep in mind that a thicker, wider object always works best. If thinner text/object is used then its not that hard to tweak the settings for various steps to still obtain a great result.

The original tutorial is still available at: [http://www.visionary-voyager.com.au/corel/photopaint/text\\_effects2/gold.htm](http://www.visionary-voyager.com.au/corel/photopaint/text_effects2/gold.htm)

**Step 1.** Create a new image 1024 x 768 pixels, 300 dpi, white background.

**Step 2.** Change the MAIN colour (upper swatch in the Colour Control area at the bottom of the Toolbox) to 10% black: Just left-click the 10% Black colour swatch in the palette. (Fig 1)

**Step 3.** Click the text tool. Change the Property bar settings to: Font: BankGothic Md BT, Size: 60 points. Click near the top centre of your image and type 'GOLD', then click the Object Picker tool to render the text. Use Object > Align and Distribute > Center To Page. This will centre the text on the

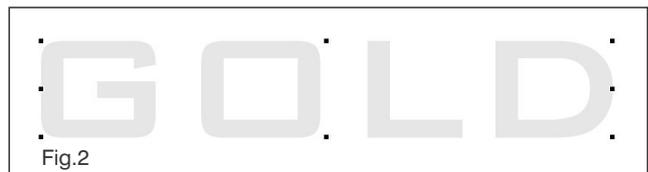
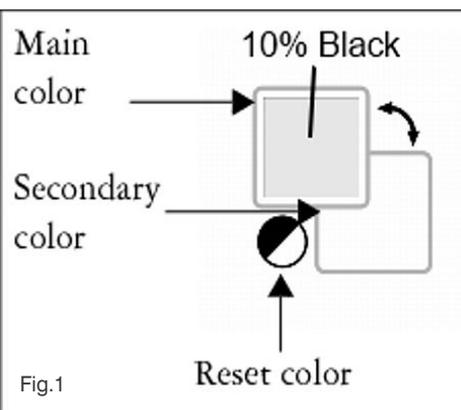
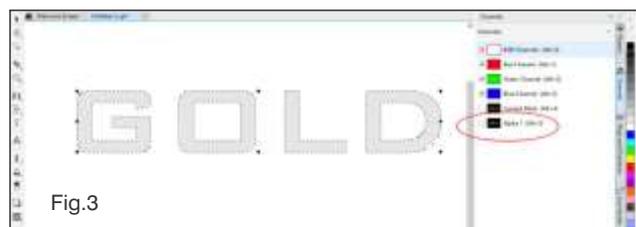


image. (Fig 2).  
**Step 4.** Create a mask from the text object and save it as a channel: With the text still selected with the



Pick Tool, Use Mask > Create From Object or use CTRL+M. Turn on Mask Marquee Visibility if you can't see the mask marquee (Mask > Mask Marquee (checked), or use CTRL+H. Save the mask as a Channel: Mask > Save > Save As

Channel , use the default name of Alpha 1. You will see this appear in your Channels Docker. (Fig 3).

**Step 5.** Apply The Boss Effect: With the Text object selected and the mask present, apply the Boss Effect (Effects > 3D Effects > The Boss) using

# CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 2019 – Gold Text continued...

the settings shown. (Edge tab: Width: 8, Height: 50, Smoothness: 50, Dropoff: Flat, Invert: ON. Lighting Tab: Brightness: 98, Sharpness: 50, Direction: 135, Angle: 45). Fig 4. You can now remove the mask (Mask > Remove Mask or CTRL+SHIFT+R)



Fig.4

**Step 6.** Adjust the object with a Tone Curve: From the menu, choose Adjust > Tone Curve, or use the keyboard shortcut CTRL+T. The Tone Curve dialog opens.

The Tone Curve filter lets you perform Colour and tonal corrections by adjusting pixel values plotted along a response curve that appears in a graph. The response curve represents the balance between shadows, midtones, and highlights. You can modify the response curve by adding nodes for curved or straight lines, drawing freehand, or using a gamma curve. Customized Tone Curves can be saved for later use.

The curve we want to make is shown in Fig 5. Click on the line to create a new node then drag it to suite. Click again to create another new node and drag it into place. When a node is active it turns red. Reposition the nodes as shown. If you accidentally make another new node simply select it then press DEL to remove it. When you have finished editing the curve, save it for later use (press the disk icon ) as



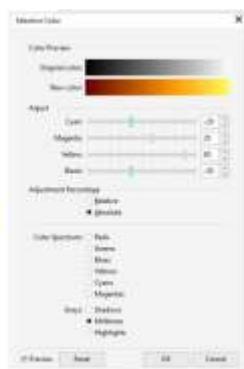
Fig.5

could be automatically added by PP). Press OK to use the Tone Curve.

**Step 7.** Adjust the Selective Color of the object: From the menu choose Adjust > Selective Color. Change the settings as shown then press OK. (Cyan: -20, Magenta: 20, Yellow: 80, Black: -20,



Fig.6



Adjustment percentage: Absolute, Greys: Midtones). Your image should now look like Fig 6.

**Step 8.** Load the mask, contract it by 8 pixels and feather it by 5 pixels: Load the mask you saved as a channel previously (Mask > Load > Alpha 1). Reduce the size of the mask by 8 pixels: Mask > Mask Outline > Contract, set width to 8 pixels, then press OK. Feather the mask by 5 pixel: Mask > Mask Outline > Feather, set the width to 5 pixels and the direction to Average. Press OK. The result should look like Fig 7.



Fig.7

### Notes:

- A. PP v2019 has a bug which incorrectly calls the Contract dialog 'Expand'. Ignore this.
- B. It is this step and the next which you may need to adjust if you use thinner text or a thin object.

**Step 9.** Create a new object and fill it with white: Create a new object either using Object > Create > New Object or click the New Object icon on the Objects Docker. Rename this object 'Highlight'.

Left click the White colour swatch on the pallet to change the Main colour to White. Select the Fill Tool and then click inside the mask on each letter to fill with white. Remove the mask (Mask > Remove Mask or SHIFT+CTRL+R). The result should look like Fig 8.



Fig. 8

**Step 10.** Load the mask and feather it by 3 pixels: Load the mask you saved using Mask > Load > Alpha 1. Feather the mask: Mask > Mask Outline > Feather , set the width to 3 pixels and the Direction to Average. Press OK.

**Step 11.** Create another new object and fill it with a grey fountain fill: Create another new object either using Object > Create > New Object or click the New Object icon on the Objects Docker. Rename this object 'Burn'.

Select the Interactive Fill tool (the smaller bucket - second icon on the Fill Tool Flyout), hold down the CTRL key to constrain the tool to the horizontal then drag the tool from just past the left end of the text to just past the right end of the text. The new object will now be fill with a gradient.

Now we need to change the gradient colours. From the Colour Palette, drag the 50% black swatch and drop onto the LHS colour box of the gradient, then drag and drop the White swatch onto the RHS colour box of the gradient. (There are many different ways to do this - this is just one).

**Step 12.** Change the Merge Mode of the Burn object to Color Burn and reduce the opacity to 50%: With the Burn object still selected in the objects Docker, change the Merge Mode to Color Burn. Click the Opacity slider on the Objects Docker and reduce the opacity to 50%. Your image should now look like Fig 9



Fig. 9

**Step 13.** Add a brown rim: Create a third new object and rename it Brown Rim.

Left-click the Dark Brown Color swatch on the palette (just below the Pink colour swatch) to change the fill colour to dark brown. Remove the mask, then load it again (Alpha 1), then feather the mask in an OUTSIDE direction by 3 pixels.

Fill the masked area of the new object with dark brown. You can either use the Fill tool and click inside each letter, or you can use the Interactive fill across all the letters and use the dark brown fill at both ends.

In the Object Docker, drag the Brown Rim object down between the GOLD text object and the background. The result should look like Fig 10.



Fig. 10

**Step 14.** Add a drop shadow and background: Remove the mask (Mask > Remove Mask or CTRL+SHIFT+R). With the Brown rim object still selected, choose the Drop Shadow, then drag to create a drop shadow. Change the settings as you like.

Select the background in the Object Docker. Then fill it (Use the Fill tool) with your favourite fill. Here I used a nice wood panel Bitmap Pattern Fill. (Fig 11).



Fig.11

You can apply this effect to objects other than just text but you may need to play about with the settings and the masks to achieve your desired effects



Fig. 12



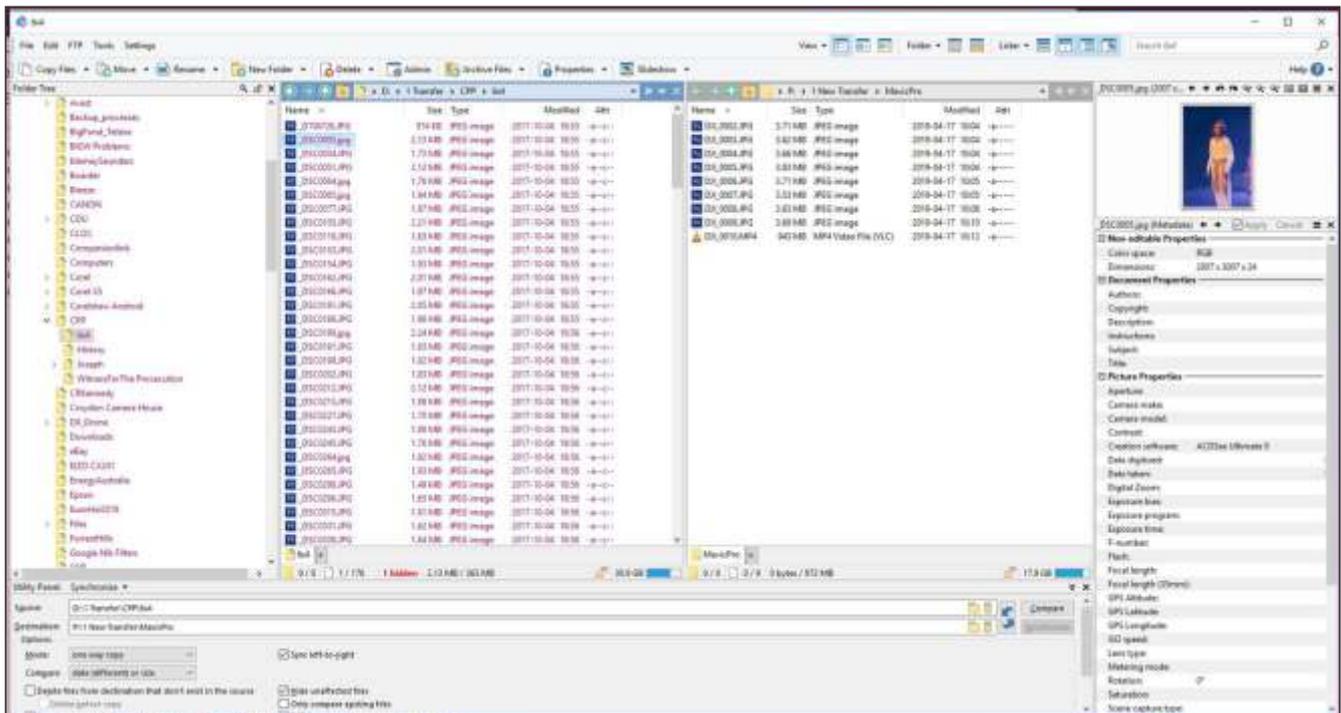
Fig.13 Hand of the King

# Directory Opus

with Richard Crompton

Originally written for Amiga back in early 1990.

Directory Opus was originally developed by, and is still written by, Australian Jonathan Potter. Until 1994, it was published by well-known Amiga software company [Inovatronics](#), when the author joined with Greg Perry and the Australian-based GPSoftware to continue the development of the product, and it has been published by GPSoftware ever since.



There are far too many features to list them all here, but to name a few:

- Single or dual file displays, with single or dual trees, make navigating and manipulating files a breeze
- Folder tabs let you keep multiple folders open and switch quickly between them
- Unique Explorer Replacement mode provides a full replacement for Windows Explorer
- Integrated viewer pane lets you preview many common image and document file formats
- View and edit file metadata (EXIF, MP3, PDF, etc)
- Sorting, grouping, filtering and searching has never been easier
- Color code or assign status icons, star ratings, tags and descriptions to your files
- and folders to make them easier to find
- Batch renaming including easy-to-use keyboard macros, and the option for a fully scripted rename using metadata
- Support for FTP, Zip, 7-Zip, RAR and many other archive formats
- Access content on portable devices like phones, tablets and cameras
- Built-in tools including synchronize, duplicate file finder, image converter and uploader and more
- Print or export folder listings, copy file listings to the clipboard, calculate folder sizes
- Queue multiple file copies for improved performance
- Support for CD/DVD burning

- Support for the latest Windows features including jumplists and indexed search
  - Fully configurable user interface - colors, fonts, toolbars, keyboard hotkeys and much more can be tailored to suit your needs
  - Full scripting interface supports VBScript, JScript or any compatible installed Active Scripting language
  - Efficient, multi-threaded, modern design - native 32 and 64 bit versions
  - Supports high DPI monitors natively - crisp, clear interface in 4K or 5K without blurring or tiny icons
  - Supports Windows XP, Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8 and Windows 10 (including Server versions)
- Link:- <https://www.gpsoft.com.au/program/program.html>

# Make videos like a pro

## Software

As the video capabilities of mobile phones continue to improve, so do the third party hardware and software options for getting the most from your camera.

Start with the camera settings on your phone. iOS and Android allow you to set the default video settings, allowing you to choose a resolution and frame rate. It's hard to recommend a setting; 1080p at 30fps is usually default, and will produce video that looks great to most eyes and on most TVs. Shooting in 4K will allow you to “zoom in” or reframe the footage later, and might be the better choice for video journalists or budding filmmakers. If you're mainly following a toddler with a camera, 60fps will capture more detail in the movement, but can look a little jarring and hyperreal to me. Of course, whenever the numbers increase, you'll be using more of your precious internal storage and battery, so take that into consideration before adjusting.

If you want even more control, switch to Filmic Pro, available on iOS and Android, which features greater options in frame rate and the ability to lock focus and exposure, so your footage will never dip in and out.

I've previously recommended Rode's VideoMic Me as the simplest and best sounding external microphone for mobile, and the company now has

a version for iPhones without a microphone jack, the VideoMic Me-L. Both feature a headphone jack behind the mic so you can monitor audio as you record.

The Sennheiser Memory Mic is a brilliant lavalier microphone that connects to a smartphone via bluetooth, but can record audio locally then sync back to the footage later; allowing the wearer to walk out of bluetooth range and still know the microphone is recording. The sound quality is fantastic, although it is rather bulky. And because the Memory Mic only comes in white there's no way of hiding it in shot, so it's not a great option for movie makers.

If you want to edit video directly on your phone, the free iMovie app (iOS) is a great place to start, with Adobe's new Rush

software offering a little more control for Creative Cloud subscribers. The most fully featured mobile editor is Luma Fusion, available only on iOS. This multitrack editor supports advanced motion graphics, variable frame rates and access to royalty free audio, while taking advantage of the power of Apple's iPad. If editing on a computer, DaVinci Resolve is incredibly powerful and, amazingly, free.



Peter Wells

# A Functional Beauty Laptops



Every part of the XPS hardware feels well thought out.

Dell has been slowly improving its XPS line of laptops since the debut of the ultrabook back in 2012. That original laptop had a lot of rough edges, but showed the company synonymous with "cheap and cheerful" PCs was beginning to take design seriously.

The XPS hit its stride back in 2015, fitting a powerful laptop into a tiny footprint, while boasting an edge-to-edge display. A few more years of iterating on this design and Dell now has the best-looking and most functional laptop on the market.

It's a big call, and I'm surprised to find myself this impressed by a Dell, but every part of the hardware feels well thought out.

The chiclet keyboard has just the right amount of travel and bounce, and feels sturdy and comfortable to type on. The trackpad is as responsive as the best on the market. Depending on your budget, the base of the laptop is either a carbon fibre or glass fibre, which makes the laptop light to hold and comfortable to rest

your palms on during use. The edge-to-edge display looks fantastic whether you choose 1080p or 4k, and the speakers sound far better than laptop speakers should.

I even love the strange little rubber nubbins on the base that lift the laptop off a desk just enough to make it easy to scoop up one handed. And while the XPS feels a tiny bit chunkier than the MacBook Pro or MacBook Air, it is shorter than both, making it just a little easier to balance on a lap or tray table.

I could say most of this about the 2018 XPS, too. The glaring issue with last year's model was the placement of the webcam underneath the screen, which meant the camera was fixed at an up-the-nose angle. Thankfully, Dell has moved the camera to a microscopic dot above the display, so the bezels remain tiny.

Dell offers the best configuration options available, too. The entry level models – with a recommended price of about \$2500 – have 256GB storage and 8GB RAM, so you won't have to skimp on the important stuff. Instead you chose between a 1080p or 4k display; 1080p will look impressive to most people, and save on up-front costs and battery life as well. The only marks against the Dell: the lid is a little tough to open one handed, and Windows 10 is much slower to wake from launch than macOS. That still makes the XPS the best Windows laptop I've used, and if I could run macOS on it I would switch from my 2018 MacBook Pro in a heartbeat.

Peter Wells

# Battling Battery Woes

Some manufacturers recommend that you remove batteries from any device not being used for a few months in case they start leaking.

Back in 2012 I wrote about the return of battery leakage and the situation was summed up by the editor of a tech magazine who told me: "If it's not an Energizer or a Duracell throw it out and replace it with an Energizer or a Duracell." My experience suggests I should now exclude Duracell.

We've become very used to leakproof batteries. If you're under 40 you may not even know that batteries can leak. When they do the leaking acid can do irreparable damage to whatever the battery is in. This used to be common before leakproof batteries, but over the last decade or so leaking batteries have returned. They usually come from China and frequently wear brands you've never heard of. Mostly they're sold in markets and super cheap discount shops, or online. You'll also often find them in battery-powered devices that highlight "batteries included" on the box. These batteries may also die quickly.

Recently I received a pair of Bluetooth speakers for test with King Kong brand batteries included for the remote. I got Daily Max brand in another, and the battery with a pair of \$700 noise cancelling headphones stopped powering them after five hours. With a good battery these headphones cancel noise for up to 50 hours. One expects better when paying \$700.

I use lots of batteries so I buy the bulk packs either at office-supply or hardware stores, or supermarkets. I've always been happy with Duracells, so I pay the not insubstantial premium. Hence a few years ago when I found one had leaked into an audio remote control I raised the matter with the company through its website.

I was told the battery was not defective, it had just passed its "freshness" date. That was March 2016 and this was 2017. How Duracell, of all brands,

could say a leaking battery is not defective is beyond me. The extent of the company's concern ran to offering me a \$10 voucher and an "enclosed" pamphlet on battery care of which there was no trace. I was annoyed but, OK, the batteries were a year past their prime.

More recently a little-used remote stopped working and when I opened the battery compartment I discovered what you see in the picture. The best-before date was March 2024. So I lodged another complaint with Duracell by filling out the online form and then discovered there was no "submit" button. I rang customer service (just try finding that number. Oh, OK, I'll save you the trouble: 1800-239901) and was advised to submit it by email.

The reply said Duracell appreciated my message and was concerned, but seemed to figure it was all my fault anyway "as you will see from the

enclosed pamphlet", which was not enclosed or even attached. Apparently I should remove batteries from any device not being used for a few months, and I should remove worn-out batteries to "prevent possible over-discharge and damage from battery leakage". No \$10 voucher this time.

Once again it appears to me that Duracell gives not a toss that its batteries are leaking to the point of falling apart. Incidentally, Duracell says the best before date indicates only how long the batteries remain useful if "stored under normal conditions". That's in the original packaging in a dry place at room temperature. I guess even when you pay for premium batteries these days you need to keep an eye on them; lumps and bumps are the initial danger sign.

Now I'm buying Energizers and ... so far so good.



Rod Easdown  
rodeasdown.com.au

[www.coreldownunder.org.au](http://www.coreldownunder.org.au)

Postal Address:  
Corel Down Under  
32 Pinewood Avenue  
East Ringwood Vic  
3135, Australia  
Phone: 0419 384 791  
(Business hours only)



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### Committee of Management

**President:**

Fred Jones  
fred572295@gmail.com  
0403 509 908

**Vice President:**

Richard Crompton  
Prphoto@bigpond.com  
0419 384 791

**Secretary:**

David Mutch  
David@visionary-voyager.com.au  
03) 9758 6258

**Treasurer:**

Geoff George  
geoff.george@telstra.com  
03 9720 2913

**Library:**

Fred Jones  
fred572295@gmail.com  
0403 509 908

**Membership:**

Lance Fishman  
electrallance@inet.net.au

**Corelunder Editor:**

Jenette Youngman  
jenettey@gmail.com  
03) 9723 9625

**Printing:**

The Print Managers  
68 Great Ryrie Street  
Heathmont Vic 3135



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